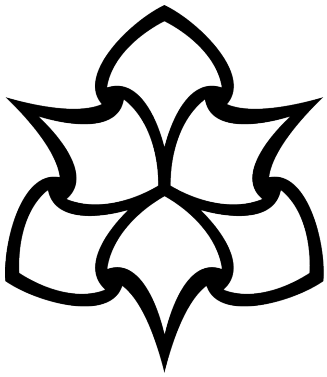

# FUNCTIONAL SKILLS IN PRISON

# RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

# A PILOT STUDY

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## Declaration of interests

This trial has been funded by Novus Group with whom the Policy Evaluation Research Unit at Manchester Metropolitan University has an ongoing relationship the objective of which is to provide Novus with advice and guidance around research, analysis and evaluation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This programme of work aims to improve understanding of 'best' practice in functional skills education in England and Wales. As part of this, we are also seeking to develop our understanding of how to deliver a randomised controlled trial that will test the efficacy of different modes of delivering functional skills. This report reflects Novus' commitment to evidence-based practice.

Overall, the research team successfully developed and put into practice a rigorous protocol that could be transferred to a full-efficacy trial. However, the trial encountered problems with recruitment that were related to disruption in the prison and changes in the wider prison estate. As such, it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether an RCT works in prisons. However, the research team did uncover some important insights into motivations to engage in prison education that will be developed in a partner paper to be made available in early 2019.

- This report relates to a pilot Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) focusing on literacy provision in a male, Category B prison in the north of England.
- This report is the second stage of the research, following on from a Feasibility Study completed in October 2017. Subsequent to this, the research team will produce a partner report looking at motivations to engage in education.
- This research gained ethical approval from HMPP National Research Committee and Manchester Metropolitan University's ethics committee.
- The RCT methodology has been employed to test two different modes of delivery literacy in prisons. Originally, we aimed to test traditional classroom-based learning with learning integrated into a vocational qualification (see Szifris & Morris, 2017).
- This focus changed upon entry into the field and this report pertains to a pilot trial, the aim of which was to assess the prospects for a test of 'classroom' delivery of functional skills training compared to delivery via 'outreach'. Outreach involves delivering education in the workshops but is not formally integrated into a specific vocational programme.
- The pilot study had two keys aims:
    1) Develop protocols and procedures for an RCT in partnership with the education department
    2) Understand the treatment-contrast and the provision of literacy education in the prison context
- The research was split into three stages:
    - Pre-pilot (immersive, qualitative)
    - During-pilot (quantitative randomisation and monitoring)
    - Post-pilot (reflective and qualitative)
- During the pre-pilot stage, the research team successfully developed processes for recruitment, randomisation and data collection working in partnership with administration and education staff in the prison.
- The research team successfully communicated the research aims and intentions, tested systems in the prison and moved into the 'pilot' stage.

- The pilot stage involved running the RCT and the aim was to recruit sufficient numbers for statistical analysis that would inform the design of a much larger efficacy trial.

- The RCT ran for 5 months. During this time, a prison-based administrator (PBA) recruited participants during their induction conducted within the first 2 weeks of arrival in the prison. However, there were lower than anticipated numbers entering the prison and, of those entering the prison, a low proportion found to be eligible for the pilot trial. Of those that were eligible, a lower than anticipated number participated in the trial, as a result of not attending induction, not possessing a Level 1 literacy qualification or not providing their consent to participate in the study.

- Each month we anticipated 30-40 individuals attending induction and aimed to recruit around 10-12 men to the trial. Over six months we aimed to recruit 70-80 participants to the trial. In reality, over 5 months a total of 81 individuals attended induction and only 43 men were eligible to participate in the research. Of these, 8 men agreed to participate in the research. Due to low numbers, Novus and PERU decided to halt the trial at this stage.

- The research team identified a range of factors relevant to the issue of low numbers:

    - The status of the prison changed as it was moved into the long-term, high-security estate. This affected the nature of the population and there is some indication that this may have led to fewer prisoners entering the prison in the first instance. Furthermore, a higher number than anticipated already held qualifications (and were therefore ineligible)

    - There was a period of unrest in the prison with a range of disturbances and incidences that were cited as reason for low attendance to induction (induction was a key point in the prisoner intake process at which eligibility for the pilot was determined)

    - A higher than expected number did not give their consent to be part of the research. In particular, a surprising number stated that they specifically wanted to be in the education department, and therefore would only accept classroom-based instruction

- Despite low numbers, the research revealed a range of challenges for education departments that are relevant to the challenge of encouraging prisoners to engage in education. This includes issues of intake and movement around the prison. However, this research demonstrated that prisoner's personal motivations were also very relevant to engagement.

- The research team also investigated the qualitative differences between classroom-based delivery and outreach. These included:

    - Intensity of delivery (classroom delivered over 6 weeks, outreach over 6 months)

    - Wider educational support and access to materials (outreach had less access to educational support)

    - The social climate of the prison (education departments are widely seen as having more positive social climates than the rest of the prison)

- Outreach, as currently provided, is precarious. It can be cancelled at the last moment due to outreach staff being required to cover lessons and the rooms provided for outreach delivery are not always fit for purpose.

- We conclude that classroom and outreach are distinct and warrant further investigation. However, before continuing with this research, further groundwork to improve attendance and develop more robust outreach delivery is required.

- We conclude that research success relates to both the mechanisms of the research process (recruitment, data collection, randomisation, ethical procedures, etc.) and the ability to recruit and retain sufficient participants for statistical analysis.

- The ability to recruit sufficient participants is dependent on the stability of the prison. Changes in the wider prison estate and issues in the specific prison affected the research success. However, arguably, the events in the participating prison are common to working in prisons more broadly. As such, the question remains as to whether a prison can provide a stable enough environment to allow a full efficacy trial to take place.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the second report of a series of working papers written in partnership with Novus and PERU. The overall aim of these papers is to learn what it would take to deliver a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) in a prison education department in the UK. This report relates to an empirical study focused on functional skills in prison that has been ongoing since October 2016. Here, we report on the next stage of the research – a formal pilot study of an experimental research design. This report outlines the methods and findings of the study. It will be partnered with a paper focused on engagement and motivation of prisoners in relation to taking part in education in prisons that will be made available early in 2019.



As a pragmatic pilot trial, the research team commenced this study with a clear aim to understand what it would take to conduct an RCT in the prison context. An initial feasibility study found that there had been almost no use of RCTs in prison education research and that applying the method to understand the efficacy of different modes of delivering literacy education would be informative both academically and to prison education providers. The feasibility study also outlined a prospective research design for the pilot. However, the pilot study has significantly developed the research design. In particular, we have developed a protocol and detailed processes of recruitment, data collection and randomisation that comply with ethical procedures, prison processes and research standards.

The research team successfully worked with prison-based staff to develop methods and protocols to recruit and randomise prisoners into different modes of learning. Through engagement with practitioners on the ground we successfully developed a protocol for recruiting and randomising prisoners, conducting data collection and transferred these data securely from the prison to the research team located off-site. These processes were developed in conjunction with the staff to ensure that the trial was unobtrusive yet rigorous. However, the pilot study was conducted during a significant period of change in the prison including in-prison unrest and a change in status. Due, in part, to the change in the prison environment, the research team did not recruit sufficient numbers to the trial to allow for statistical analysis of the treatment contrast and, due to the low numbers, the research was halted at 5 months.

Overall, is it difficult to draw conclusions about whether an RCT works in prisons because of the disruption within the prison and in the wider in the prison estate. There are lots of positives to draw from the research. The team successfully developed rigorous system of checks and balances in the research to ensure we followed ethical protocols. AS this report articulates, we successfully set up systems that allowed us to accurately and efficiently collect data and conduct randomisation. Furthermore, we developed a deeper and more robust understanding of the treatment contrast and of the problems of delivering effective outreach programmes in the prison context. However, the RCT did not recruit sufficient numbers for statistical analysis. Qualitative data indicates this was related to unrest within the prison and changes to the wider prison estate. Furthermore, prisoners expressed specific preferences around education and articulated some important insights into their views of classroom provision and workshop provision of literacy.

This report provides an overview of the research processes and articulates the key findings and outcomes. Section 2 sets out the research aims and design, and describes what we achieved in the field. We discuss, in detail, the processes and procedures set up in the prison to ensure that recruitment and data collection were both practicable and rigorous, and in line with established best practice in the design and delivery of experimental studies. In this, the report also describes how we responded to the requirements of the prison.

Section 3 reports the findings and outcomes of the research. A key challenge for this research was the recruitment of participants to the trial. When the project was initiated, we aimed to recruit 70 to 80 participants. In practice, the research team only recruited eight participants over the course of five months. Qualitative data

including extensive observations, fieldwork notes and interviews with staff and prisoners, offers an insight into the reasons for low engagement.

Section 3 also articulates other challenges to the research. These include the change in status of the prison and the unrest that occurred in the prison over the trial period. We also discuss the acceptability of the trial to staff and prisoners. Both groups were broadly receptive to the research methodology and there was little concern around the randomisation processes *per se*. The caveat is that many of the staff did raise concerns that randomisation did not cater to the individual circumstances of each prisoner, and this is supported by the data that were collected.



Section 4 outlines the summary and conclusions of the research. We discuss the successes and challenges of conducting a pilot RCT in the prison context as well as the challenges of literacy provision more generally. We also outline the next steps which relate to a further investigation into motivations to engage in education whilst in prison.

# 2. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

At present, Functional Skills courses form the core of the educational curriculum of a prison (see Szifris & Morris, 2017 for a full discussion of Functional Skills). Within this, literacy programmes and literacy skills take precedence. As such, robust and rigorous research into the delivery of English courses can provide clear guidance to practitioners and providers of educational programmes. This report pertains to the pilot stage of an ongoing investigation into literacy provision in prisons. In this section, we begin by providing an overview of the background of the research, summarising the feasibility study and outlining the initial aims. This is followed by an overview of the treatment-contrast, articulating the original aims as set out in the feasibility study and the change in focus required for the pilot stage. Section 2.2 then details the pilot study providing an overview of the pre-pilot stage, the pilot, and the post-pilot data collection. Section 2.3 then discusses the processes developed to manage the research trial, the processes of data collection, recruitment and randomisation as well as the ethical considerations.



## 2.1 BACKGROUND

In the general population, most studies into adult literacy focus on scale of need as opposed to practice (Brooks et al., 2013) and a similar situation exists for literacy in prison education departments. This pilot study follows on from a desk-based feasibility study that considered the possibility of using a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) methodology to test the effectiveness of provision of functional skills in a prison in England. This work took a pragmatic approach, seeking a compromise between the ideal research design and the practical implications of applying such a design in the field (Torgerson & Torgerson, 2007). To achieve this, the research team organised the work into three areas – research design, practical application and theory. The feasibility study provided the necessary background to set out a trial design, and the pilot study represents the application of this learning to the field. In particular, it articulated a research design 'in theory' that this pilot study then applied, and adapted, for use in the field. Further to this the feasibility study also conducted a literature review into Functional Skills in adult education and into methods of a measuring progress in literacy. We developed a research design that fits with current practices in the field and adapted this to the specific circumstances that we encountered. The rest of this section outlines these issues.

### 2.1.1 CHANGING THE FOCUS FROM INTEGRATED LEARNING TO 'OUTREACH'

The aim of this research was to implement a pilot trial to test two different modes of delivering literacy. The focus of the research changed between feasibility study stage and the pilot study stage. In this section, we offer an overview of the original intentions. In section 2.1.2, we outline the treatment-contrast investigated in the pilot study. Based on focus groups with prison education staff and literature reviews, the focus was on the contrast between traditional classroom-based teaching and learning integrated into vocational activity. The pilot study initially aimed to examine which of these modes was the most effective in the prison setting among adult learners. To achieve this, the research team developed a research design that involved randomising eligible prisoners into one of the two modes of learning. Thus, the contrast between the nature of these two modes of delivering FS training would form the treatment contrast. The feasibility study outlined the aims and design of the research in more detail.

The research team initially aimed to compare classroom-based teaching with integrated learning. Integrated activity in this context refers to programmes that view the development of language, literacy, numeracy and vocational skills as "inter-related elements of one process." (Courtenay & Mewar, 1995, quoted in Hegarty & Feeley, 2009, p.2). This means that FS are not taught as discrete skills but are instead situated and contextualised into vocational training (Black & Yasukawa, 2010). Traditional classroom-based activity offers literacy education

delivered independently and without reference to the learner's broader educational activities. In prisons, FS courses are often delivered intensively such that the learner is engaged in a literacy and/or numeracy course full-time over a short period.

As the research progressed, it became apparent that current literacy provision within the prison chosen for the pilot did not include integrated learning. Instead, the education department delivered a programme referred to as 'outreach'. Rather than offering genuine 'embedded learning' within a vocational context, 'outreach' consisted of literacy taught outside of education – on wings and in workshops – but still acted as a discrete course not related to vocational activity. This fundamentally changed the treatment-contrast that we would be investigating. The next section discusses this in more detail.



### 2.1.2 THE TREATMENT CONTRAST: OUTREACH VS. CLASSROOM

In preparation for the pilot trial, we anticipated three key contrasts between outreach and classroom. As part of the research process, we employed qualitative methods to examine whether the areas of contrast were found in the practical delivery of both forms of instruction. Section 3.3. discusses this in more detail. Here we provide a brief justification for focussing on these areas:

1. Intensity of delivery

   Classroom offers more intense educational experiences over a shorter time-period. As a result of conducting the feasibility phase of this research, we found that this may be relevant to long-term learning and increase the likelihood of passing a course.

   The education department offers outreach once a week with each lesson lasting around an hour. The education department estimated that it would take a learner 6 months to obtain a qualification if they were to do outreach. In addition, outreach teachers teach in a non-educational environment without access to the range of teaching materials of a classroom teacher. This might also impact on ultimate outcomes.

2. Teaching support

   The different locations of the teaching mean that outreach teachers, during their educational delivery, do not have the wider educational support provided by a dedicated education department. In contrast, outreach took place in a room next to the workshops. The outreach teacher transports all materials to the workshops and does not have access to wider departmental support whilst teacher or the usual education equipment such as whiteboards or computers.

3. Social climate

   Social climate as a potentially relevant treatment contrast drew specifically on previous research in this area (as opposed to the physical differences described by teachers and observed by the research team). Research suggests that the education department of a prison provides a distinct social environment as compared to the overarching prison culture (Szifris et al., 2018). With outreach being delivered in workshops, the distinct social climate of education departments has a potential impact of the prisoner experience with the literacy class. Preliminary research indicated that education departments see fewer disturbances, have better staff-prisoner relationships, and engender more positive attitudes among prisoners (Szifris, 2018). A range of reasons underlie these differences including improved attitude from staff towards prisoners, the capacity for prisoners to engage in positive activity unrelated to their past

criminal activity, and the perceived separation between education staff and prison staff (see, Szifris 2018, Crewe et al., 2013, Waller 2000, Duguid & Pawson 1998, Ruess, 1997).

Table 2.1 summarises the key areas of similarity and difference between classroom and outreach-based instruction.



**Table 2.1 Treatment Contrast**

| Treatment characteristics | Degree of differentiation | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| Curriculum content | Same | Functional skills courses will broadly follow the same curriculum regardless of how they are delivered. |
| Course Structure/Intensity | Different | Classroom-based delivery involves engaging in education for between 10 and 15 hours per week whilst outreach involves engaging in education for 1 hour per week.<br>Classroom-based courses take place over 6-8 weeks of instructions whilst outreach takes place over 6 months. |
| Success criteria | Same | Regardless of mode of delivery, the required threshold for each level of qualification remains the same. |
| Teaching Support | Different | Outreach teachers are often isolated from other teachers in the workshop areas. They work alone in the workshops during their time without support from wider educational staff. (Note: Outreach teachers have the support of prison staff and workshop leaders but not educational staff). Classroom teachers have a peer mentor who acts as a teaching assistant and has access Student Services in the education reception. |
| Broader prison experience | Different | Learners in outreach will spend the majority of their purposeful activity in workshops. Learners in classrooms will spend at least half of their time in education. |
| Environment of delivery | Different | Outreach is usually delivered in rooms attached to workshops. Classroom from within a dedicated educational room within an education department. |
| Teaching materials | Mostly the same | This will depend somewhat on individual teachers. However, the expectation is that teaching materials in integrated courses will be adapted to be relevant to the VT qualifications. |
| Wider educational materials | Different | Teachers in classroom-based delivery will have access to a range of materials including interactive whiteboards, books, stationary. Outreach teachers do not have access to electronic whiteboards and only to stationary and materials that they bring with them. |

## 2.2 THE PILOT STUDY

This pilot trial constitutes the first attempt to evaluate instruction in literacy in English prisons by comparing two common modes of delivery – classroom-based programming and 'outreach'. The experimental contrast is therefore the *mode of instruction* – classroom setting versus outreach. The research design deployed to test that contrast comprised the creation of two groups at random. Prior to this baseline assessments of existing literacy were undertaken. Subsequent to randomisation, one group were exposed to instruction in literacy at Level 1 in

the classroom setting, while the other group to similar instruction but in outreach settings, that is in prison workshops. 12 weeks after randomisation and then again at six months trial participants were asked to complete further literacy assessments.

The study was conceived of as a pilot. This necessitated further research in which mixed qualitative and quantitative data collection took place through a 'sequential explanatory' design. Although the ultimate aim was to develop processes to allow for a full efficacy trial in a prison education department, the research team also sought to understand the educational context in prisons and the current situation regarding literacy provision. To facilitate this, the research was conducted in three stages:



- Pre-pilot (immersive, qualitative)
- During-pilot (quantitative randomisation and monitoring)
- Post-pilot (reflective and qualitative)

This involved extensive time in the field conducting observations, testing processes and training staff. The next section describes the overall research aims and design.

### 2.2.1 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of the pilot study was to gather information essential for the design of a scientifically rigorous mainstage trial and through so doing assess the prospects for being able to conduct such a trial. The primary research question was:

> How can an RCT be successfully administered in the context of a prison education department?

The pilot aimed to address uncertainties associated with delivering the proposed main trial in prison and potentially across a number of prisons. These uncertainties related to the statistical information needed to determine sample size for the full study, the practical barriers that might undermine the trial and the nature of the interventions.

In addition, the research also aimed to address substantive questions of the appropriateness of different types of delivery. Specifically:

> Is classroom-based delivery over a short period better than outreach with regards to:
>
> a) attainment of a qualification?
>
> b) long-term retention of FS learning (over a six-month period)?

As discussed in the section on sample size below, this pilot did not aim to recruit sufficient numbers to allow for statistically rigorous analysis of outcomes. Instead, the mixed-methods research design allowed for the collection of quantitative data to facilitate the statistical design of an efficacy trial and qualitative understanding of the experience of literacy learning in prisons and some indication of appropriate provision.

In the following section of this report will consider in greater detail the context in which the pilot study took place and the development of the trial protocol.

### 2.2.2 PRE-PILOT: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND DEVELOPING THE PROTOCOL

As a pilot trial, the methodology involved an *iterative* process of monitoring and adjusting procedures. Taking a pragmatic approach, we sought a compromise between the ideal research design and the practical implications

of applying such a design in the field (C. J. Torgerson & Torgerson, 2007). To achieve this, the research team was immersed in the field for six months prior to the start of the trial (Szifris 2018, Bailey 2007).

The research team conducted a range of interviews in the lead-up prior to starting randomisation. These included:

- Interviews with key informants across the pilot site including administrators, literacy teachers, educational managers, and prison staff involved in learning and skills,
- Semi-structured interviews with prison-learners.



Data collection during this period also involved taking extensive and detailed fieldwork notes to record a range of observations (Bernard, 1994). These included observations of the prison generally, and a specific focus on the practices and processes of the education department.

Observations focused on two key areas, a) the prison's induction and allocation processes, and b) the literacy provision on offer. Observations were recorded in fieldwork notes taken both during and after visits to the prison, with the research team spending time in and around the prison to ensure an in-depth understanding of the chosen pilot site. This allowed for a clear articulation of context, a focus on the areas of compromise required for a full trial, and a consideration of the likely success of such a trial. This included the barriers that might be encountered were the study to expand beyond the pilot site and take the form of a multi-site efficacy study.

In addition to general, unstructured observations, the research team also conducted specific, targeted, structured observations, of:

- The delivery of lessons in both modes of delivery,
- The process of approaching, recruiting and gaining informed consent of prisoner-participants (around 10%).

These observations resulted in an RCT protocol which articulated the treatment contrast (discussed below). The research team considered questions of fidelity to the protocol, dose delivered/received, reach, recruitment and context (Saunders, Evans & Joshi, 2005). Following Saunders, Evans & Joshi (2005), 'fidelity' refers to the extent to which staff involved in recruitment, randomisation and data collection were willing and able to follow the protocol. 'Dose delivery' and 'dose receipt' refer to the numbers that took part and the rate of completion of the data collection measures among the participants. 'Reach' considers the proportion of the target population that actually took part in the research process whilst 'recruitment' considers how participants were recruited to the trial. Finally, 'context' refers to the prevailing circumstances in the prison and the prison's education department during the trial.

This work was done alongside a range of stakeholder engagement activities including presentations to prison and education staff, work with prisoners who have experience of literacy education in prison, and the production of information leaflets regarding the research process. These helped both the research team and the prison staff to prepare in advance of the RCT. It also allowed the team to adapt the design to the demands of the fieldwork site, as discussed below.

### 2.2.3 THE RCT

A key output of the pilot study involved addressing a range of questions the focus of which was the design, and delivery, of a multi-site mainstage or efficacy study. The research team developed a protocol for the pilot trial which can be found on the PERU website.[1]



This pilot study involved individual-level randomisation with allocation to the two interventions on a 1:1 basis, and pre and post-randomisation literacy assessments administered to both groups.

The key aims of the study were:

(1) To provide information required to plan a mainstage study;
(2) To establish whether or not the practical requirements of the trial could be met in a prison environment; and
(3) To learn more about how the two modes of delivering instruction in functional skills in literacy are managed and delivered in practice within the context of a trial.

The pilot took place in a long-term, high-security prison in the North of England, a Category B men's prison (denoted as 'Prison Y'). Novus chose the prison as the site because of its relatively stable population and high performing education department. It was also had a large population of prisoners passing through the literacy programme in the year leading up to the pilot that. Had this level remained constant in the year of the trial, it would have provided a sufficient number of eligible participants for the trial. As is discussed further below however, this was not the case.

Prisoners entering 'Prison Y' during the study were deemed eligible for the pilot if they met the following requirements:

1) The prisoner entered 'Prison Y' as a 'general population' category prisoner between 1st May and 30th December 2018. Entry into 'Prison Y' has the following criteria attached:
    - Is male
    - Is over 21
    - Has four or more years left on their current prison sentence or is serving a Life or Indeterminate Sentence for the Protection of the Public
    - Is rated as being suitable for stay in a 'category B' prison
    - Is placed on one of 'Prison Y's three 'general population' wings.

2) The prisoner is deemed eligible to enter a course of functional skills in literacy. More specifically the prisoner should be:

    - Functioning at least at Entry Level 1 in literacy according to the BKSB Initial Assessment; and
    - Does not hold, and has never held, any qualification in English, Literacy or Functional Skills, at Level 1; or
    - Holds a literacy qualification but not a Functional Skills Literacy Qualification at Level 1; or
    - There is no evidence that they hold a Literacy Level 1 qualification or equivalent

[1] https://www.mmuperu.co.uk/assets/uploads/files/Trial_Protocol_22_May_2018.pdf

3) After being assessed as being able to cope with prison education. Staff were given discretion here to make this judgement.

Once deemed eligible for the trial, the process of recruitment began, and prospective participants were approached. A prison-based administrator took responsibility for this processes under the training and supervision of a member of the research team. Throughout the study, the administrator followed the agreed procedures for determining entry into the trial. This involved:



- Checking eligibility
- [if eligible] Obtaining informed consent
- [if consenting] Administering baseline measures
- Allocating trial IDs
- Randomisation
- Allocating to research arm
- Recording data in the LookUp file (see below)
- Anonymising LookUp file
- Emailing anonymised data to the University-based research team

During the development of the protocol, the PERU research team maintained a regular presence in the prison to ensure a) the protocol worked with the systems already in place in the prison l and b) administrators were trained and comfortable in maintaining fidelity with the protocol.

Once eligibility and consent had been gained, the process of data collection began. This involved gaining formal consent, recording some background information (previous educational experience in prison and prior to prison, previous engagement with literacy education, (see Appendix 6.1) and administering a reading test. The prison-based administrator then entered this data into the in-prison LookUp file discussed in section 2.4. The research team trialled the processes for recruitment and data collection. We specifically took into account prisoner perspectives and staff workloads to develop an auditable system of recruitment to the trial and data collection.

The primary outcome measure was *reading comprehension* obtained from the English E3 test and English L1 test developed by AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd. This test was to be administered first prior to randomisation and then repeated at 13 weeks and 25 weeks post-randomisation, with an additional writing test (also developed by AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd.). A £5 payment for each additional test completed was offered as compensation for the participants' time

In addition to the primary outcomes, three secondary outcomes were proposed:

(1) Attainment of either an entry level 3 or level 1 qualification within 25 weeks of entering the study
(2) Number of recorded CAB1 (challenging anti-social behaviour) warnings issued by the prison at between randomisation and 25-weeks
(3) The 'IEP status' of the prisoner (Incentive Earned Privilege status)

We selected a sample size based on obtaining an estimate of the proportion of prisoners that complete a literacy test at 25 weeks post-randomisation, which we expected to be around 80 per cent. We calculated the required sample size as 76 prisoners, taking into account the likely loss to follow-up.

The research design also depended on, and had to adapt to, the specific practices and procedures of the education department. In addition to the nature and content of outreach provision, methods of recruitment onto a course were particularly relevant. First, educational classes had a 'roll on, roll off' structure that meant that learners joined classes as they arrived in the prison, rather than as clustered cohorts as happens in some

other prisons. Second, the prison allocated prisoners onto educational courses through their induction process and their subsequent meeting with the 'Opportunities Board' (see Appendix 6.4). The recruitment processes of the trial needed to fit with the recruitment processes into literacy. As such, the team chose to recruit RCT participants during the induction process. This meant the trial necessarily took a trickle-flow design, whereby individuals were asked to participate on a weekly basis according to induction numbers and as a result actual recruitment was ad-hoc. The section below outlines the processes and procedures that were developed for this.



### 2.2.4 POST-PILOT DATA COLLECTION

In addition to the RCT and prison-based data collection, the research team decided to engage in empirical research towards the end of the trial period as it became clear that the trial would not continue as planned (see discussion below). The aim of this was to gather additional data on the conduct of the trial, on the topic of the trial, and on reasons why recruitment had been less than planned.

Members of the research team conducted a range of interviews after the pilot ended. These included interviewing:

- Staff involved in the research
- Research participants
- Prisoners who declined to be part of the RCT due to stating they had a 'strong preference'.

The interviews focused on

- Staff and prisoner understanding of the research aims and processes
- Staff and prisoner's views on literacy provision, its challenges and strengths
- Perception of the distinction between workshops and education
- Prisoner motivations for engaging or not engaging in education whilst in prison

We were assisted in this endeavour by the continued support of the prison and its staff. This allowed us to provide added-value to our findings and to go a little further in making recommendations. These findings are described in Section 3 of this report.

## 2.3 ETHICS

This research has been approved by the Faculty Ethics and Governance Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Manchester Metropolitan University; the prison Governor and prison Education provider; and HMPPS National Research Committee.

All participants will be fully informed of the research upon recruitment to the trial (see Appendix 4). The PBA will talk through the information sheet with eligible participants and confirm that they have understood the information. The PBA will also have to explicitly confirm that the participant understands that they do not have to participate in the trial. The participant will complete and sign a Consent Form. This will be stored in the position until the research has been completed.

All participants were assigned a trial ID. Within the prison, the research team kept a LookUp file on a Quantum Computer that allowed administration staff within the prison to attach the trial ID to a specific individual for purposes of follow-up. Outside of the prison, researchers did not have access to any personal identifiers. Instead, they had an anonymised list of participants identified only by a trial ID. Baseline measures and follow-up measures will have a trial ID written on them for transfer out of the prison for data entry and analysis. All measures were checked for identifying features before leaving the prison and Any data transferred out of the

prison has been held on secure laptops in accordance with MMUs guidelines. Fieldwork notes were anonymised, and interview transcripts stored securely.

Prisoner names and any significant identifying features have been amended relevant details about individual participants altered.



## 2.4 MANAGING THE RESEARCH TRIAL

A key purpose of the pilot study was to develop clear systems and protocols in order to manage and monitor the study. In this section, we outline the processes that were developed in conjunction with the prison-based team.

Methods of data collection were fitted into the prisoner journey (see Appendix 6.4). Data collection was divided into three streams which followed the individual 'prisoner journey' from the start to the end of their engagement with the pilot. Key aspects were 1) the prison-based recruitment and data collection processes and 2) the storing and monitoring of data at the university.

### 2.4.1 PRISON-BASED DATA COLLECTION

The research team trained two prison-based administrators to recruit participants, collect data and monitor participant involvement in the research. These prison-based administrators (PBAs) introduced the research to prisoners at induction, recruited eligible participants and administered baseline literacy assessments. They were also responsible for generating trial identification numbers (trial IDs) and randomising participants (see below and Appendix 6.1 for details of the step-by-step process).

### 2.4.2 DATA CAPTURE

The research team developed a process to monitor recruitment to, and participation in, the trial, and to collect appropriate data. We created a 'LookUp' spreadsheet using Excel, to record progress (see Appendix 6.2). An organising principle here was the idea of the 'prisoner journey' as a means of capturing key data and registering/keeping to key project milestones. The spreadsheet was composed of different tabs, in which the PBA recorded relevant information. This included information on the ongoing recruitment process (numbers invited and attending induction and numbers participating in the research); the monitoring of research participants (where they were each week, whether or not they were still in the trial); assessment data; timeline (key milestones like assessment dates) and participant information. Each time the PBA recruited a new participant to the trial, they collected the following information:

- Trial ID
- Monitoring data
- Trial data
- Consent
- Personal data
- Prison data
- Education (gained both outside of and inside prison)

There were two versions of the spreadsheet. The full document (Masterfile) was kept securely on the PERU computer. A shorter version (in-prison LookUp file) of the same document was kept on the secure system within the prison. Each week one of the prison staff would add data to the short version (Trial ID and data/monitoring/participant information). Each time the PBA added a new participant to this file the

randomisation process would be triggered, and a new Trial ID generated. The prison staff member would then create an anonymised version of the same file, and send it by email to PERU, who would then copy this (anonymised) data into the larger Masterfile.

The process described here allowed the research team to efficiently capture data whilst meeting rigorous ethical procedures and adhering to prison rules. The following section reports on the findings of the study and draws on data generated through these processes and captured in the data files described.

# 3. FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

This section outlines the findings and outcomes of the pilot study. This section begins by articulating the numbers involved in the research starting with the numbers coming into the prison, followed by numbers eligible and numbers recruited. Drawing on qualitative data, section 3.1.2 discusses the changing prison climate and offers an explanation of the low numbers recruited to the trial. Section 3.2 then goes onto discusses the appropriateness of the research design in the field concluding that (due to the extensive work during the feasibility study stage and in the prison prior to data collection commencing) there were no real objections to the work being carried out in the chosen pilot site. Finally, Section 3.3 discusses the treatment contrast. Again, we conclude that there is sufficient distinction between the two modes of delivery to warrant further robust investigation (i.e. to warrant a full-efficacy trial). However, the research team also documented a range of challenges to delivering outreach in particular but also to motivating men in prison to engage with education.



## 3.1 NUMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS

This section describes the numbers flowing through the education department over the course of the research, the number eligible for the study and the number of prisoners recruited to the trial, as captured by the research team's data collection processes.

### 3.1.1 THE STATISTICS

There were 150 invitations sent to prisoners to attend their prison induction during the trial period, between 24th May and 18th October. Of these, 81 people attended. Of these, only 43 were eligible to participate in the research. Figure 3.1 below shows the numbers at each stage of the research. There was a significant decrease in numbers coming into the prison over the period of the trial. This impacted significantly on the numbers invited to induction, attending induction and, consequently, numbers eligible to participate in the research. For example, there were two weeks, in May and July, when no prisoners were invited to induction, and a further seven weeks in which five or fewer prisoners were invited.

**Figure 3.1 Trial data**

| **Numbers engaged with:** | | **Reasons for non-eligibility:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of invitations sent for induction: | 150* | Had qualifications | 32 |
| Numbers who attended: | 81 | Awaiting exam results | 2 |
| Numbers who attended but were not eligible: | 38 | Restricted movement | 2 |
| Numbers who attended but did not consent: | 35 | Restricted by health/disability | 2 |
| | | | |
| Numbers who participated: | 8 | **Reasons for non-consent:** | |
| For the length of the trial: | 7 | Strong preference for class: | |
| For part of the trial: | 1 | • Wants to be in classroom environment | 3 |
| | | • Wants to be in full-time education | 8 |
| Allocation: | | • Didn't want outreach/workshops | 7 |
| Classroom | 3 | Strong preference for outreach/workshop | 3 |
| Workshop | 5 | Wanted to obtain qualification asap | 4 |
| | | Refused to engage with Education | 3 |
| Number of sessions during the trial period: | | Refused to upskill to FS | 3 |
| Workshop | 38 | Needed one to one support | 2 |
| Education | 24 | Wanted delay before starting education | 1 |
| | | Refused to take part in research | 1 |

*There is a small number of some double counts in this figure, as some people who did not attend were sent a second invitation but were recorded as having attended in the data on non-participation.

### 3.1.2 EXPLAINING THE LOW NUMBERS



This section considers the figures above and the reasons for low participation. The section also draws on extensive fieldwork notes taken over the course of the pilot, formal and informal interviews with staff and formal post-participation interviews with staff and prisoners.

Over the course of five months, the in-prison team recruited eight prisoners to the research trial. This was far below expectations which were to have recruited 50 participants by this point. As the chart above demonstrates, there were significantly lower numbers of prisoners at a range of points, from the stage at which the men entered the prison to the point at which they were asked to consent. These are considered below.

a) Numbers entering the prison

During the trial period, the prison moved into the high security and long-term estate which meant the characteristics of the prisoner intake changed. Over the course of the research, the prison saw a reduction in its intake, especially compared to the months leading up to recruitment. A significant proportion of new prisoners already held literacy Level 1 qualification or equivalent. Indeed, 32 of those who attended induction (over a third of the total) had qualifications that meant they were not eligible for the trial. Staff also stated that they were also, overall, younger, drawn from a wider geographic spread, and had committed more serious offences.

b) Numbers attending induction

The overall prison climate seemed to change over the period of the research which had a direct impact on numbers attending induction. In particular, there were increasingly regular incidents of violence and unrest and attitudes among staff appeared to be changing. As already noted, induction numbers overall were lower than for the preceding period. Additionally, education staff reported that there were issues surrounding prison staff's capacity to escort men to work and education, and therefore getting to induction (150 invitation to induction were sent with only 81 men attending). Staff working in the education department felt that the environment was deteriorating and there was much discussion about the low levels of experience among prison officers which meant prisoners would persuade them to let them stay in their cells and ask to be returned to the wings. Furthermore, staff regularly discussed the "quality of the men" coming into the department. By this, they referred specifically to prisoners claiming that there was a change in attitudes among prisoners towards staff. One staff member stated that there were now "younger prisoners" and that they "come to education when they feel like it… a challenging group of individuals" (staff member, Prison Y). Another said that prisoners used to see a difference between male and female staff members, but "now they don't care". These statements were offered as explanations for the lack of engagement in education more broadly as well as the low attendance to induction. It should be noted, however, that this evidence is anecdotal, and without a formal and more systematic investigation into staffing levels and unrest in the prison, it is not possible here to verify staff assertions. It was clear though that there were some issues in the prison that adversely affected staff and prisoner relations.

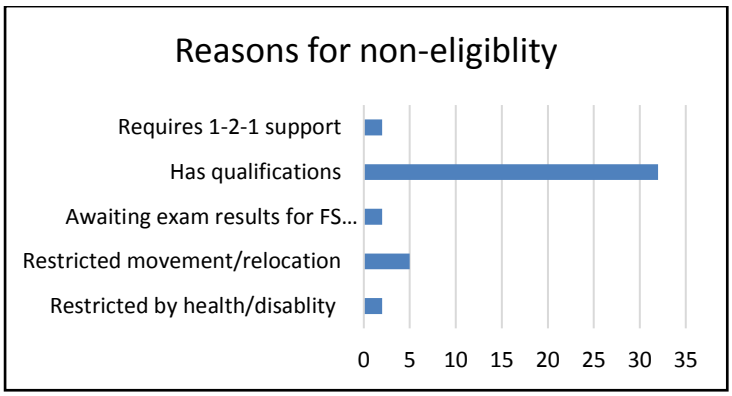
c) Numbers eligible to participate

A high number of men were not eligible to participate as they already held literacy qualifications. The reasons for lack of eligibility were recorded as part of the data collection and summarised in Figure 3.2 below. However, the underlying reasons for such a high number of ineligible participants remain unclear,

but over the course of five months, the situation did not improve, which suggests some form of structural change to the intake as opposed to a natural dip. Some staff members speculated that the need for functional skills in the wider prison estate was no longer so acute – the drive towards improving functional skills has now been in force for several years meaning that those who have been in the system before or for a couple of years will have already completed their education. With the shift to high security, the suggestion is that the cohort entering the prison would have had experience of prison before. Again, it was not possible to verify this with formal data.



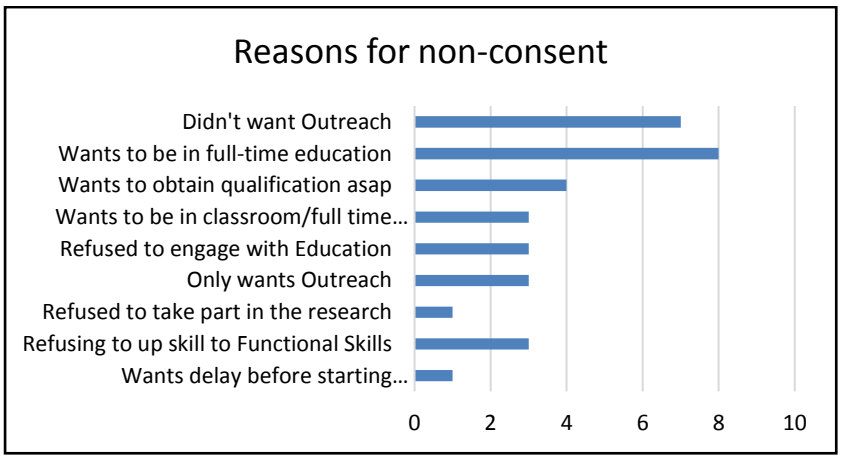
**Figure 3.2 Non-eligibility**




d) Numbers consenting

In total, 35 (out of a total of 43 who were eligible) prisoners actively chose to not take part in the research. This was for a number of reasons, as illustrated in Figure 3.3 below. The PBA recorded reasons for non-participation allowing the researchers an insight into the barriers to conducting this type of research in prison. These can be broadly categorised as – a refusal to engage in education at all; a strong preference for education in the education department; a strong preference for education in the workshops, and, a need for a more tailored approach. In the case of the last of these, four men wanted to make sure they obtained a qualification as quickly as possible (necessitating classroom-based learning) and one man wanted to delay starting education for pragmatic reasons. Only one man was reported as refusing consent because he did not want to take part in the research.

**Figure 3.2 Non-consent**



## 3.2 THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN IN THE PRISON CONTEXT

As a pilot study, this research also sought to understand whether the RCT methodology would be appropriate in a prison education environment. In particular, it was important to understand whether staff and prisoners would be willing to comply with the randomisation process and accept the methods as part of their systems of working.



### 3.2.1 RECEPTION OF THE TRIAL

In general, prison staff accommodated the research as far as they could, assisting with access, information and data gathering throughout the process. From the outset, the staff were accommodating and welcoming of the research team in the prison. They took the time to understand the research and engaged in the briefings provided by the research team and so on.

The research required a significant presence from the research team, with weekly visits to the prison over the course of several months. The protocol had been developed in conjunction with the prison and therefore was designed to fit with existing systems and processes. Despite the strong commitment of both the prison staff and research team, some adaptations were required after the project had started. In particular, the recruitment and randomisation process had to take place before the Opportunities Board as the prison staff had to know where each man was going to go when the Opportunities Board started.

The research highlighted the importance of a research team *embedding* itself effectively in the prison context in order to ensure a trial is successfully administered. Over the course of the pilot, the researchers engaged the assistance of senior management, teachers, administrators and learning support. Ensuring staff members understood the reasons for the research presence and had a stake in the outcome helped ensure the RCT could proceed, and without problems.

A further and significant problem that emerged over the course of the research relating to the use of randomisation as a means of determining which participant was assigned to which intervention. This is not a novel issue: medical RCTs must wrestle with the ethical issues inherent in a trial that assigns some people to potentially more effective treatments than others (see Weisburd, 2003). In the context of this trial, it seems that some potential participants were put off because they had a strong preference for one or the other interventions, as shown above. Some, however, seemed to take a more general issue with the loss of autonomy and choice. As one staff member remarked in the post-trial interviews “The randomisation [was] also difficult because these are young men, who want to choose their destiny. It’s definitely a barrier. Most want one or the other [classroom or outreach], for all sorts of reasons…” (staff member, Prison Y).

## 3.3 THE TREATMENT CONTRAST IN THE FIELD

Immersion in the field allowed the research team to develop an in-depth understanding of the provision of literacy in the prison context. This section describes current literacy provision and outlines some of the challenges of delivery.

### 3.3.1 THE REALITIES OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

At the time of the research, the education department delivered classroom-based literacy every morning and afternoon. The English classroom had a specialist English teacher with specialist qualifications in adult learning. Literacy instruction was delivered in a single classroom, which was large and bright with windows overlooking the prison grounds. The teacher had access to a range of equipment including an interactive whiteboard, books,

dictionaries, stationery, computers and a printer. In the morning, the lessons last for 3 hours, 15 minutes and the afternoon, for 2 hours, 45 minutes.

Outreach provision in the prison is precarious – it is a low priority for the education department and has varying rates of success. The first priority for the education department is to ensure that classrooms have teachers. As such, outreach teachers can be called upon to cover classrooms during illness and holidays. Furthermore, workshops have quotas and taking the men out of workshops to do literacy relies on the goodwill of the workshop leader.



There are two dedicated outreach teachers in the department who visit different areas of the prison (primarily workshops and wings). This report focused on workshop provision of outreach delivered by one teacher. The outreach teacher delivers literacy and numeracy with each class and sees learners once a week. There is slower progress in outreach and learners are expected to progress to the next level in around six months (compared to around six weeks in classroom delivery).

Outreach took place in a separate room near to the relevant workshop. These rooms are not usually purpose-built educational classrooms. Rather, they are rooms that are utilised by educational staff because they happen to be available. Most lack educational equipment such as pens, books, dictionaries, and other materials. In one outreach class, the researcher observed a room as having only a single small desk in the middle of a large room that seemed to be used for storage. A number of learners were required to use a single small desk and work from personalised worksheets that the teacher had brought with them to workshop. The teacher was required to take all materials with them to the workshops. There was no access to computers or an interactive whiteboard and no wider support was available from the education department during the outreach session.

The differences between the circumstances in which classroom and outreach-based instruction took place appear to have been important in determining why some prisoners expressed strong preferences for one mode of learning over the other. Eleven eligible participants did not engage in the research because they specifically wanted to do full-time education and a further seven said that they did not want outreach. Three men said that they only wanted to do outreach, whilst seven refused to engage in education whatsoever. Education was regarded by some interviewees as more pleasant, "quieter" and without the constant need to "fend for yourself…". The education department was regarded as better resourced, "…you get to use computers…" and less hierarchical, because there are "no bosses". Staff members concurred and described the high staffing levels (a maximum of ten in a class with one staff member and usually a peer mentor) and the "calm" atmosphere compared to the rest of the prison.

Outreach classes were held in workshop spaces. Although these varied, many of the workshops were large spaces with one prison officer looking after 30 to 40 men. The staff in workshops seemed to spend most of their time in their offices, with minimal interaction with the prisoners, who were left to get on with their work (fieldwork notes). Men discussed the different attitudes between education staff and prison staff stating that education staff treated prisoners with more respect than they were given in workshops. That being said, prisoners also discussed the benefits of workshops, which included having access to hot drinks and being allowed to eat your own food. However, a further key distinction between outreach and classroom is the different ways in which men engage in the learning. Outreach is "re-engagement work" (staff member, Prison Y) in that many of the men in outreach have rejected education in the past. Even with the randomisation element, in outreach the men are invited to come to the education class each lesson and have the opportunity to refuse. "There are excuses for [the most reluctant learners]… 'I've forgotten my glasses'…" (staff member, Prison Y).

In summary, a range of factors are relevant to successfully delivering literacy education in prison. Outreach and classroom are distinct with outreach having fewer resources than those based within a traditional classroom. Beyond the physical environment, there was evidence that prisoner attitudes and preferences were also relevant to their choice to engage in the research.

# 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Overall, it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether an RCT works in prisons because of the disruption within the prison and in the wider in the prison estate. There are a range of positives – rigorous system of checks and balances, able to do randomisation, able to collect data. There wasn't



This section outlines the main successes, challenges and lessons learnt from the trial. The research reported here was ambitious and challenging. Nonetheless, there were clear successes and some important lessons were learnt. Although we were not able to recruit sufficient participants to the research, there is clear indication that an RCT methodology is possible in, and appropriate to, the prison education context. This does however come with some specific caveats which we discuss in this section. Beyond the question of whether the methodology could be adapted to the research question, we also aimed to develop a better understanding of literacy provision in prisons.

## 4.1 SUCCESSES

The research team successfully developed protocols for recruitment, data collection and randomisation in the prison context. We did not encounter any issues regarding the ethics of these processes and worked closely with frontline staff to ensure the processes worked for them. Overall, staff and prisoners were comfortable with the research design and interested in what the research might find. We feel this was, in part, due to the extensive time spent in the field and working with staff to develop trust and effective working relationships. However, this is also due to the nature of the research. We aimed to compare two types of literacy provision in the prison meaning that no prisoners were denied access to education during the course of the research and our aims were to understand 'best practice'.

## 4.2 CHALLENGES

Recruitment of sufficient numbers to the trial was the key challenge in this research. In implementing an RCT methodology to the prison setting, it is important to understand that a range of factors can affect the success of a trial. In the wider prison estate, it is not unheard of for a prison's status to change or the intake criteria to be altered according to the needs of the prison population. This did indeed happened halfway through our research project, which affected the prison population, and consequently the trial. We also based our recruitment on estimates of likely new entrants into the prison. Due to the changing status of the prison and challenges across the wider estate our initial estimates of the likely numbers of prisoners eligible for the pilot and willing to take part proved to be optimistic, and appreciably so. Indeed, movement between prisons generally can vary dramatically. At several points during the research, intake into the prison dropped to such low levels that it was not possible to recruit. Future research will need consider recruiting from within the population in the prison rather than relying only on intake.

The final issue with recruitment relates to the prisoners' consent. A higher than anticipated number of participants did not agree to participate in the research. As part of the research processes, we recorded research for non-participation. This yielded some interesting findings relating to prisoner motivation. The research team have explored these issues in more depth in response to this finding through engagement with the relevant literature, and interviews with prisoners. The findings of this research will be presented in a separate report focusing on prisoner engagement and motivation.

## 4.3 WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?



This pilot study has considered a) the successful application of the RCT research methodology to the field and b) the nature of the intervention under consideration. Concerning the former, research success relates to both the mechanisms of the research process (recruitment, data collection, randomisation, ethical procedures, etc.) and the ability to recruit and retain sufficient participants for statistical analysis. The question of whether the RCT methodology can be applied to the prison context and developed into a full efficacy trial must hold these two perspectives in tension. Concerning the latter, the interventions under discussion, although qualitatively different, also have a range of challenges to delivery.

The research team and Novus staff successfully developed detailed protocols that allowed for the mechanisms of the research to take place. The methods worked with the prison systems, were unobtrusive and simple to administer. The staff in the prison were included in the research process from the outset and, as a result, the reception of the research was positive. Further, the research team spent extensive time engaging with prison teachers, prison providers and prison staff in the pilot prison to ensure a detailed and specific understanding of literacy in prisons. Although time-intensive, this work, along with the feasibility study stage, proved essential.

However, the research also highlighted that prisons can be volatile places. Over the course of this project, the prison changed status (which affects the types of prisoners entering the prison), saw a period of unrest with regular disturbances, and experienced difficult relationships between staff and prisoners. If the environment in which we conducted the pilot had been more stable, the research team may have been able to recruit more participants. However, arguably, the events in the participating prison are common to working in prisons more broadly. As such, the question remains as to whether a prison can provide a stable enough environment to allow a full efficacy trial to take place.

The research indicated that the interventions themselves are sufficiently distinct to warrant further investigation. Prisoners were clear in articulating the distinction between learning in the education department and learning in other areas of the wings. It is unclear as to whether this will translate into a measurable difference in outcomes. However, the research also demonstrated that individual preference and the motivations of prisoners to engage in education is directly relevant to successful literacy provision.

## 4.4 NEXT STEPS

As discussed, the research team were immersed in the field throughout the project. This lead to a range of unanticipated observations and informal conversations that provided additional insights relevant to a) engaging prisoners in education in general, and b) current literacy provision. These prompted further exploratory investigation through further purposeful and formal observations and interviews with prisoners. In particular, due to the high number of non-consenting prisoners citing a strong reference for classroom education, we focused on exploring motivations to learn and understanding the differences between the educational environment and the wider prison environment.

This issue of motivations to learn will be the focus of a partnered report and the next stage in the research. Although this research has been fruitful in developing processes that could allow us to move onto a full-efficacy trial in the longer-term, our suggestion for the immediate future is to investigate motivation more formally. This research has demonstrated that there can be low recruitment into education (150 invited to induction with only 81 attending). Furthermore, many prisoners stated a clear preference for being in the education department or for not wanting to be in the education department. We therefore suggest a short, targeted piece of research in a single prison that can investigate issues of engagement with the objective of developing practical strategies to improve the rates at which prisoners enter and continue in education.

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# 6. APPENDICES

## 6.1 RECRUITMENT AND RANDOMISATION PROTOCOL



Preparation

1. Receive list of attendees to induction.
2. Take Research Data Collection pack to education area.
   This includes:
   - Personal details form
   - Information sheets
   - Consent forms
   - Baseline literacy test: Entry Level
   - Baseline literacy test: Level 1

Wednesday in education area

On the Wednesday, all paperwork for participants will be complete. Remember, you must create a **Personal Details Form** for *every* person on induction.

3. Explain that there is a research project taking place that they might be eligible to take part in.
4. Note name, prisoner ID and date on **Personal Details Form.**
5. Check eligibility for the trial by asking questions in Step 1 of the **Personal Details Form**. If they answer yes to question 1, then they are eligible for the trial.
   a. If NOT eligible, circle 'not eligible' in top right-hand corner of Personal Details Form by. Place in envelope marked 'not participating'. Thank them for their time.
   b. If eligible, move onto next step.
6. Read through the **Information Sheet** with the participant and make sure they understand the research and what it involves.
7. Confirm their understanding by answering questions in Step 2 of the **Personal Details Form**.
8. For question 4, complete the **consent form** and ask them to sign the bottom of the form.
   a. If they do NOT consent, thank them for their time and allow them to leave. Do not try to persuade them to change their minds. Circle 'No Consent' in the top right-hand corner of the **Personal Details Form** and place in the 'not participating' envelope.
   b. If they DO consent, circle 'participating' in the top right-hand corner of the **Personal Details Form**.
9. Explain that you now need to collect some further information from them and complete Step 3 of the **Personal Details Form** (overleaf).
10. Move on to Step 4 of the **Personal Details Form.** Explain that, as you mentioned, they need complete another English test now. It won't take long and they just need to do their best and take as long as they need. Remind them that if they complete the form they will be entitled to a £5 payment for their time.
11. Hand them the correct test according to instructions in Step 4.
12. When they have completed the measure, check they have completed the measure. If they haven't see if they will try again but don't push them.
13. Place the **Personal Details form**, **Consent Form**, and **Literacy test** into an envelope and note their surname on the front.
14. Thank them for their time and explain that they will receive a letter telling them where to go on Monday morning.
15. Place envelope into research box.

Repeat these steps for each man in the Opportunities Board.

Thursday in the education area

16. Notify the Opportunities Board of who has preliminarily agreed to take part in the research.
17. Return to education department staff room and open quantum computer.
18. Open **LookUp file**.
19. Resave the LookUp file with the correct w/c date.
20. Remove 'Not participating' envelope from the research box and take out the **Personal Details Forms**.
21. On the first tab, under the correct date, enter
    - The number of attendees to the Opportunities Board
    - The number of prisoners not eligible
    - The number of prisoners who did not consent.
22. Place the **Personal Details** forms for those not participating in the filing cabinet, marked 'not participating'.
23. Remove envelopes for participating learners from the research box.
24. For each individual participating, remove **Personal Details form**, **Consent Form**, and **Literacy test** from the envelope.
25. Enter the data for learner into **LookUp file**.
26. Note learners trial ID and the date in the top left-hand corner of **Personal Details form**, **Consent Form**, and **Literacy test.**
27. Open 'the randomiser' link. For each new entrant, answer the questions and enter the Trial Id.
28. Record outcome of randomisation on the **LookUp file**.
29. Place the **Personal Details form** and **Consent Form** and **Literacy tests** into the file marked 'MMU research'.
30. From the ET database, complete further details of participant.
31. Repeat steps 27-33 from each research participant.
32. Save **LookUp file.**
33. Send information regarding allocation to relevant people
34. Resave **LookUp file** as 'w/c DATE LookUp file for MMU'
35. Delete columns C and D (with prison Number and Name) and save.
36. Email p.traynor@mmu.ac.uk and k.szifris@mmu.ac.uk the **LookUp file for MMU**. Please double check you are emailing the correct LookUp file.
37. Close **LookUp file**.

## 6.2 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF LOOKUP FILES



**PERU BASED LOOKUP FILE**

The Masterfile file has seven tabs

1. Data capture
2. Recruitment numbers
3. Monitoring
4. Timeline
5. Assessment
6. E3 data
7. L1 data
8. Dropdowns

**Participant data**

This is the same as the tab in the In Prison worksheet (see below). [Staff member] will have In prison version of this and complete it every week. This is the only tab that [staff member] needs.

The first column, in white, is the number assigned to each new participant, from 1 onwards. This is set to two digits because we anticipate no more than 100 at this stage, and two digits is necessary because this number forms part of the Trial Id number.

In addition to this column, there are 8 shaded sections, coloured to indicate related data. I have reorganised this so that data has a more logical order.

Trial ID

Monitoring data (updated weekly)

Trial data

Consent

Personal data

Prison data

Education in/out of prison

Complete at end

For each *new* person, [staff member] will complete the *entire worksheet*. For each person who is already part of the trial, she will complete only the set of tabs in the section Monitoring data (updated weekly). The only section [staff member] will ignore until the end of the trial is the Complete at end section, which can be filled in it at end.

**Recruitment numbers**

[Staff member] will complete each week in her worksheet and send along with the above tab (in the same worksheet). I will then copy the data into my tab on the PERU worksheet. I will automate the dates the same as I have in the Timeline tab below.

**Monitoring**

This and the rest of the tabs are for PERU only and will be completed by me either from [staff member] 's data capture sheet or from other sources.

The Monitoring sheet is basically my way of keeping track of each participant, listing keep milestones.



**Timeline**

This is also for monitoring the trial, but takes a different form. As soon as the first person registers/starts, the first date will be entered and will automatically enter a weekly date till the end of the trial. The first day is a Thursday (DoR) the second is a Monday (Start date) and each subsequent day is a Monday. For each date column, the same auto responses are used, allowing us to track each individual each week.

- Not started yet
- DoR
- Start date (first week of class)
- Participating
- Exited
- Wants to rejoin
- On hold
- Completed

**Assessment**

This aggregates the data from the following assessment tabs E3 and L1 data

**E3 data and L1 data**

These tabs are used to record the results of each of the three trials for each individual

**Dropdowns**

This is a list of the drop downs for the various menus, which I will automate once we sign off the spreadsheet. I can put a few examples in for the discussion next week.

**IN PRISON LOOKUP FILE**

There are three tabs

**Participant data**

This is almost the same as the Data Capture tab in the PERU LookUp file. The only difference is that the Monitoring data column has its own tab on this spreadsheet, so that [staff member] can more easily update the data.

The first column, in white, is the number assigned to each new participant, from 1 onwards. This is set to two digits because we anticipate no more than 100 at this stage, and two digits is necessary because this number forms part of the Trial Id number.

In addition to this column, there are 7 shaded sections, coloured to indicate related data. I have reorganised this so that data has a more logical order.

Restricted (does not leave prison)

Trial ID

Monitoring data empty column

Trial data

Consent

Personal data

Prison data

Education in/out of prison

Complete at end



For each *new* person, [staff member] will complete the *entire worksheet*. For each person who is already part of the trial, she will complete only the set of tabs in the second Tab Monitoring. The only section [staff member] will ignore this until the end of the trial is the Complete at end section, which can be filled in it at end.

**Monitoring**

This is for the data that [staff member] updates weekly for each prisoner. [staff member] will need to cut and past the ID section for each new starter.

**Recruitment numbers**

[staff member] will complete each week and send along with the other tabs (in the same worksheet). [PERU staff member] will then copy the data into my tab on the PERU worksheet. I will automate the dates the same as I have in the Timeline tab in the PERU worksheet.

## 6.3 PROTOCOL FOR FOLLOW-UP WEEKS 13 AND 24



In weeks 12 and 24 (for PERU)

1. Be alerted by database as to who will require follow up (including participants who did not take part in trial but agreed to take part in follow up)
2. For each participant, on the 12th and 24th Wednesday that they have been in the trial, Peter respond to [staff member] 's email (that she sends the participant numbers in) with details/ID numbers and a note on which measure participants should complete. Follow up with phone call if necessary.
3. The email subject heading will be changed to 'Follow up alert' and will include the draft invitation letter on first occurrence.
4. In anticipation of any holiday/time away, Peter will email Kirstine and Steve with relevant information so that we can decide who will do what. In cases of mild and unexpected illness, Peter can still probably do this, in cases of more severe illness or unexpected time off/new job, Peter will make sure that the database is clear, and will add a new column perhaps describing status for each individual.

In weeks 12 and 24 (for prison)

1. Receive email from Peter Traynor with trial ID numbers of individuals who require follow up.
2. The email will include a note on which measure the participants should complete.
3. Send **Invitation Letter** to individuals asking them to attend the education department on the morning of the following week i.e. weeks 13 and 25 respectively
4. Complete prison procedures to ensure prisoner can attend the allocated education class.

In weeks 13 and 25

*Administering follow-up measure*

1. Check number of individuals due to attend and the measure that they are due to take.
2. Take correct number of follow-up measures to the education department.
3. Wait for all participants to arrive, follow up those who have not attended.
4. Remind participants that they are taking part in a research project, that they do not have to stay but if they do they will receive a £5 bonus as a thank you for their time.
5. Go through **Instructions for administering questionnaires** with participants.
6. Hand out the measures.
7. Allow participants plenty of time to complete. Encourage them to do their best.
8. At the end, collect all the measures in.
9. Check participants have written their name, Prison number and date on the front of the paper.
10. Return to education department.
11. Open **LookUp file.**
12. Note which participants have completed their follow-up measure in the correct week. For any who failed to attend, note this.
13. Note trial IDs in top left-hand corner of each follow up measure.
14. File measures in box mark 'MMU research'.
15. For those who did not attend, place them on the list for the following week.

*Behavioural data*

1. For each of the participants, email safer custody asking them for numbers of violent incidences and Anti-social behaviour warnings.
2. Record this data on the **LookUp file**.

3. Email p.traynor@mmu.ac.uk and k.szifris@mmu.ac.uk the numbers for each of the trial IDs.

*Qualitative/ethnographic observations*

(Some data already collected)

1. Age/social class/ethnicity/nationality/other relevant cultural markers
2. Age left school/Experiences at school/Reasons for leaving school (if early)
3. Geographic issues: hometown, region, type of school attended etc.
4. Family background/attitude to learning/daily learning practice
5. Current participation in prison learning/prior experience of/participation in prison learning
6. Existing highest level of education/thoughts about reading and writing/maths
7. Employment background (if any)

## 6.4 THE PRISONER JOURNEY